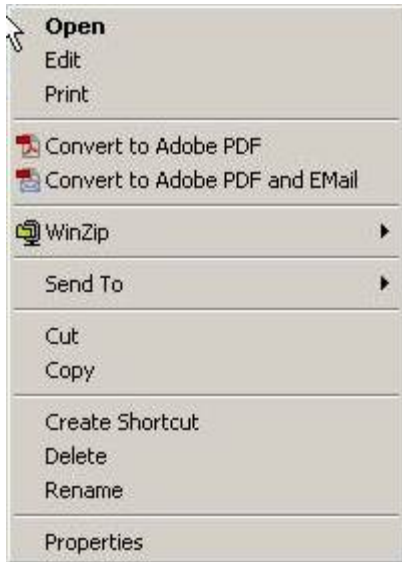


Alternate Menus

What is the Alternate menu? It's a commonly asked question, even though most everyone has seen it before. If you Right-Click any file, folder or drive icon, a menu will appear. That is the Alternate Menu for that particular item.



As you can see, this menu provides you many options. In this example, the “Convert to Adobe PDF” and the “WinZip” lines are there because I have those programs installed on my computer. Other applications may allow for other options in this menu.

Notice that “**Open**” is written in bold. That means that if you were to Double-Click the file instead of Right-Click, the file would Open (or Activate). Whatever is written in bold is the default action taken when the file is Double-Clicked on.

It is important to note that the options in this menu change, depending upon the type of file that you Right-Click on. In the example above, I Right-Clicked on a Program Shortcut file. Later on, I will give you some examples of the options from other file types.

Lets go over the options that are in the top section of this menu:

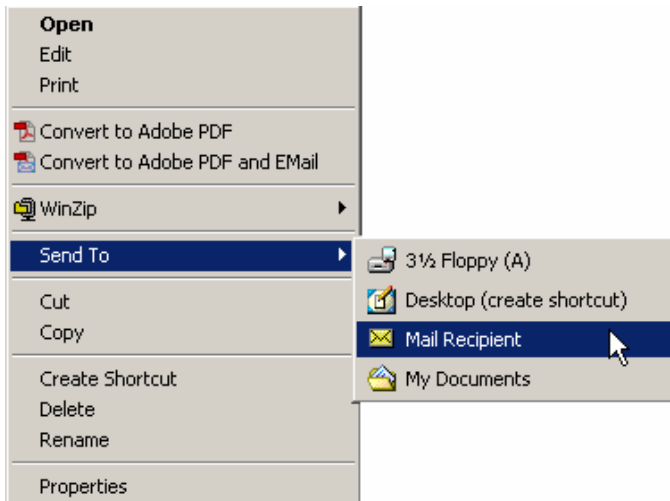
Open: This opens or activates the file. If the file is actually an application, using this option will start the application. If the file is a text file or image file, it will open that file in the program that is used to read or edit the file.

Edit: This option appears if the file that you Right-Clicked on is allowed to be edited, such as a text file or graphic file.

Print: This option sends the file directly to the printer.

Remember (in this example) the Adobe PDF and WinZip options are only there because I have these programs installed. If a program is installed that interacts with one of your files, you may see an option for that program in this menu.

Options that have the black arrow pointing off to the right side mean that there are additional options for that function. When I highlight the “Send To” option, another menu appears.



Send To: This option allows you to send your file directly to a floppy disk for storage.

Create a Desktop Shortcut of the file.

Email the file to someone.

Or...drop it directly into you're "My Documents" folder.

The Cut and Copy section is in most all Alternate Menus. These are perhaps the most used functions on a computer. Since all office applications have these functions, I'll go into these in more detail towards the end of this lesson.

The second to last section of the Alternate Menu has the Create Shortcut; Delete; and Rename functions.

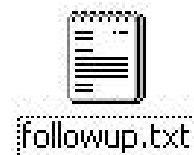
Create Shortcut: This allows you to create a shortcut of a file that you can place anywhere on your computer. Most commonly, a shortcut is placed on the Desktop, to provide quick access to a program or document. You can generally tell what file is actually a shortcut by the little black arrow in the lower left hand side of the file icon.



Delete: This will allow you to delete the selected file.

Rename: This will allow you to rename the file. **USE CAUTION with this function.** Renaming a file may have consequences. A file name has meanings other than just the name of the file, and is separated into two different parts: The name, and the extension.

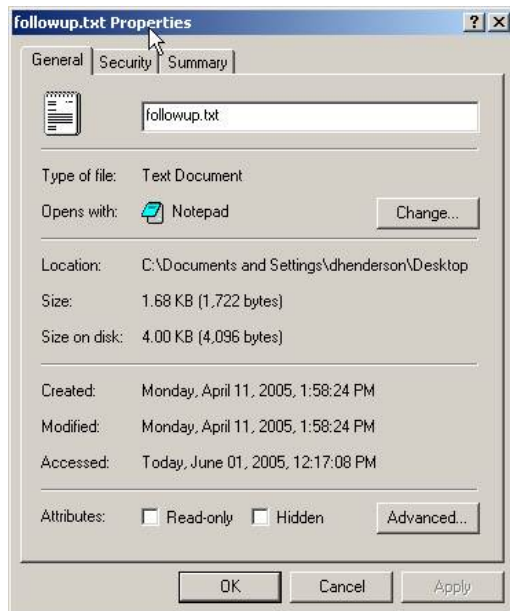
The name IS the actual name of the file. The extension is the three letters after the period in the file name. The extension denotes what type of file it is. In the example to the right, you see the file "followup.txt." "Followup" is the name of the file, and the extension ".txt" tells me that this is a text file.



I can change the name from "followup.txt" to "checkup.txt" as long as I don't change the extension from ".txt".

File extensions will be covered in another lesson.

“Properties” is generally the last option in the Alternate Menu.



In the Properties window, you can see the Type of file and what program is used to Open the file.

You can even change what program is used to open the file.

You can see the:

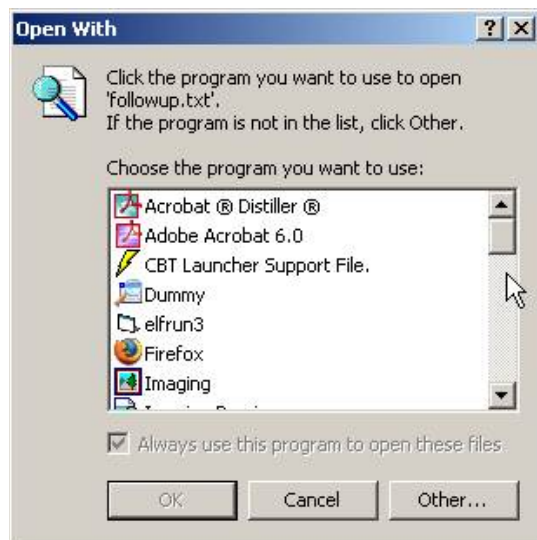
- Location of the file

- Size of the file

- Day that it was created

The Attributes are important as well, however we'll go over these in another lesson.

If you were to click on the “Change” button in this box, you would be able to select a different program to open the file. Lets say that I don't want to use “Notepad” to open my text documents anymore. Instead, I would prefer Microsoft Word. Therefore, I click on the “Change” button:



The Open With window appears. This lists all the programs that I have installed on the computer. I scroll down the list to find Microsoft Word, and select it.



Once I press the OK button, all of my text files will now open up in Microsoft Word, instead of Notepad.

As you can see, the Properties window has very useful information.

Now lets look at other variants to the Alternate Menu:



This is the
Alternate Menu
from the "My
Computer" Icon

This is from a
drive on the
computer

This is from a
Desktop Shortcut

As you can see from this sample, Alternate Menus come with different options depending on what type of file we are looking at. However, some of the options are available on all of the Alternate Menus.

You will use the Alternate Menu's in your day-to-day computer usage. Spend some time and look at the different options that you have for some of your files. This will get you more familiar with the files on your computer, and what you can do with them.

REVIEW

- Alternate Menu's are a way to quickly access common functions and information for a specific file or a selection of files